644 782 tenpelem (the earth) in order that he may have health, happiness, etc. In addition, he provides a bar of salt which is to be shared among the old women.

As he passes through Nonsin, he gives a sheep, a white rooster, and some salt for a similar sacrifice.

644 On the seventh day he returns to Ouagadougou and stops at Bilbalogo, the home of the Kam Naba (chief of the young men), whose guest he becomes. The Mogho Naba informs his ministers, and the day is set for the appointment.

The customary formalities are nearly identical with those required for the appointment of canton chiefs (kombemba).

[100] After Appointment

On the day following his appointment, the Djiba Naba calls upon his father. A cushion (nagpouré) is placed near a shed in the emperor's courtyard at the foot of a special stake called the "zandaogo of the Djiba Naba." The Djiba Naba becomes the guest of the Gounga Naba, in whose section he will henceforth stay whenever he comes to Ouagadougou. (At the present time, because of the enmity between the emperor and his brothers, the Djiba Naba stays at Kamsaoghin [section of the Kamsaogho Naba], not far from his father's house.)

644 557 He then has to call upon his father's ministers, and precedence requires him to visit the Ouidi Naba, the prime minister, first. As soon as the latter is notified of the arrival of the Djiba Naba, he offers him a sheep, some dam (beer) and some kola nuts.

Then the crown prince goes to the Larrhallé Naba, who is required to present him with the same gifts, and thence to the Kamsogo Naba, chief eunuch, where the same honors are rendered to him and where he is also given a sheep, beer, and kola nuts.

He next calls upon the Gounga Naba, the Poé Naba, the Samande Naba and, finally, the Baloum Naba, from whom he receives many gifts.

On the third day he completes his visits by calling upon the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou. There he is offered water containing [millet] flour and honey, as well as kola nuts.

644 554 576 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a customary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 782 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 788 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, [888] that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers.

644 788 431 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 788 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 304 681 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers, and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

Respect Due the Home of the Naba

554 The kombéré is absolute master of his territory. His subjects must show him the same deference as he himself shows to the Mogho Naba.

However, even though he is not a noble, a minister of the emperor need not remove his cap to respond to the salute of a kombéré. On the contrary, the latter is required to humble himself, to give way before him just as he would before the Mogho Naba.

644 The nabiga (son of a naba), nakomsé (descendants of naba) and, still more, an ordinary Moaga are all categorically forbidden to wear their shoes or their caps at the court of the naba. The only exception to the rule is when the person is a Moslem convert, but even then he always leaves his shoes at the door. He may, however, wear his cap or turban. Shoes and headgear may be put on again only after the subject is 300 meters from the house of the naba. Sometimes, in places where custom is rigorously enforced, the person must be out of sight.

[687] Any infraction of these rules was punished severely by the lash and by confiscation of property by the samand'kamba of the naba [110] when the offender was not of the nobility, that is, was neither nabiga nor nakombga.

291 It is interesting to note that wearing the fez, originally one of the badges of chiefdom, was forbidden to the nabiga and all the more to the talga (ordinary Moaga). Today it is commonly worn by men and youths since European traders and shops have made common an article which was once very rare.

576 Shaking hands. One seldom sees a naba extend his hand to one
613 of his subjects or, more especially, to his brothers or fellow nobles (nakomsé).

There are two reasons for this prohibition: 1) the naba is supposed to maintain a certain distance between himself and his subjects, a normal practice; and 2) a superstitious belief has it that persons [154] harboring evil intentions toward the chief put magic powders on their hands to cause swellings which may develop into real abscesses.

Hierarchies among the Ministers and Officials at the Court of the King of the Mossi

554 63 There exists a kind of hierarchy among the naba. One chief may have to uncover his head before greeting another because he is his "little brother" (yaoua) or because he is in the presence of a chief of higher rank (for instance, the "petty kings," dima).

It is extremely difficult to determine the hierarchy which exists among the kombemba because there are so many of them, but they respect it even today. It would be difficult to undertake research on the subject which has only local interest and would not benefit our work.

645 554 576 The following paragraphs, therefore, will deal only with the ministers and other officials at the emperor's court.

Mutual relations among the ministers before the French occupation. (a) The Ouidi-Naba, prime minister and chief of the cavalry. [113] After his appointment the Ouidi Naba is required only to call on the Mogho Naba. The other ministers and the notables at Ouagadougou must call on him. Naturally, by virtue of his rank, the Ouidi Naba is expected to offer them large quantities of beer and to have sheep and even cows slaughtered in their honor.

(b) The Larrhallé Naba, a minister also and guardian of the tombs. Despite what happened quite recently (March-April, 1929), the Larrhallé Naba is only required to call on the Ouidi Naba and, if he wishes to do so, on the Gounga Naba. He does not call upon the other ministers and officials.

(c) The Gounga Naba is required to call upon the two higher ministers, the Ouidi Naba and Larrhallé Naba. The other officials at court must call on him, and, like the Ouidi Naba, he offers them beer and meat.

(d) The Baloum Naba, the steward of the Mogho Naba and chief of the pages. Early in his term of office he must call upon the three principal ministers and upon the imam. No other visits are required of him, he does not call upon other court personages.

This stated, let us go on to the most important matter.

644 Ministers and other officials at the court of the Mogho Naba. In the courtyard where the emperor's audiences are held, [114] there are heaps of stones to mark the places of the ministers and their followers.

The Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongho Naba assemble with their followers. The Baloum Naba, Zusobinkassanga, and the rest also have their fixed places. They are not permitted to leave their places to greet one another until they have saluted the Mogho Naba.

In the old days only the Baloum Naba, the Zusoaba, and the Kamsaogho, together with the servitors and grooms, were allowed to call upon the emperor in his palace courtyard. The other ministers and court officials (Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, etc.) were not, under any pretext or circumstance, permitted to penetrate the interior courtyard of the home of the Mogho Naba. They had their presence announced by soroné and [344] waited under a shelter (benda zandé) in the audience courtyard. Only a few years ago, when the present Gounga Naba succeeded his father, he asked the reason for this prohibition. Since no good reason was given, he asked the emperor for permission to break the rule, and since that time all his colleagues have followed suit.

644 The cap. We have seen that at the time of his appointment 292 [115] each minister, court official, and canton chief is presented 554 with a cap by the Mogho Naba. Obviously he cannot wear the same cap for the rest of his life, so later replacements bought by him are regarded as just as sacred as the original. All his subjects, even the son of a naba, are strictly forbidden to wear this cap. We have also seen that in the old days an ordinary Moaga was expressly forbidden to wear the red fez (1) since this was the type of headgear

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1. Among the Habè [Habe] the hogon is the only one who may wear the red fez. When young Habè men are taken into the [French] army as riflemen, they never again wear the red fez [part of the army uniform] after they are discharged and return to their homes.

conferred by the Mogho Naba on the canton chiefs.

With the exception of the Tenkodogo Naba and, more recently, the Boussouma Naba, neither of whom renders honors to the Mogho Naba, all ministers, other petty dima, and chiefs of Mossi cantons must take off his cap to greet the emperor.

(a) Between ministers. The Ouidi Naba does not remove his cap for any of his colleagues.

The Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, and Kamsaongo Naba are equals and greet each other with their caps on.

The Baloum Naba and Samandé Naba are also equals, and they do not take off their caps when greeting each other. However, they were required to remove their caps (pougla) and even to perform the kantissé in the presence of the three principal ministers.

[116] Next in importance are the Nemdo Naba or "chief of the meat" [in charge of slaughtering], the Poé Naba who is confessor to the emperor's wives, the Bend Naba, chief of the drummers, and, finally, a whole string of petty chiefs of no importance who can hardly be distinguished from the general populace and whom it would be fruitless to enumerate here.

The Poé Naba may keep his cap on when he is in the presence of the Baloum Naba or the Samandé Naba, but he must remove it for the other ministers and must even prostrate himself to perform the kantissé.

Not very long ago, when the province chiefs of Ouagadougou possessed neither comfortable houses nor furniture, the ministers rarely visited each other. I have even once seen a minister sit on the ground in order to give his seat to one of his colleagues.

Whenever matters came up which required a meeting, the ministers met at night in one or another of their homes without the knowledge of the public.

Today, the principal ministers have proper reception rooms. They can, therefore, remain seated when a more important colleague calls upon them and limit their special consideration of the visitor to offering him a Morris armchair or a folding chair.

The Tensoba, the minister of war, never takes off his cap for a minister or a canton chief. He does so only before the emperor.

701 Formerly, when war broke out and he was summoned to [117]
554 Ouagadougou, the Tansoba [sic] assembled the principal ministers
645 of the Mogho Naba at the home of his host, and his word was final.

Aside from this special case, he might call upon a minister, but then a servitor always brought along the cushion on which he would sit until the minister receives him in his private quarters. He was never received in public.

Once inside, the Tansoba occupied the best seat, and the minister got down on the floor and performed the Mossi salute.

In sum, the Tansoba was held in higher esteem than any other personage at the king's court.

(b) At the present time. Today ministers often visit each other.
645 Since they have rapid means of transportation at their disposal, they
574 regularly go about without escorts. Most often their visits are made in order to deal with matters of general interest.

When a minister calls upon another minister, he keeps his cap
645 on and neither removes his shoes nor performs the kantissé. They
576 are equals. This equality has been established by the local admin-
574 istration which has granted the same rights and salary to all. The minister shakes hands with his colleague and takes a seat. He is served copious quantities of beer, and then he takes his leave.

In spite of assertions to the contrary, the Mossi empire is po-
642 litically disorganized. This accounts for the errors committed by the local administration and the [118] mistakes held against the ministers of the Mogho Naba who for a long time were granted too much power.

The Origin of Mossi Chiefdom (Legend), or the Way the Peulh, the Yarcé, and the Blacksmiths Salute Mossi Chiefs

773 The Peulh, the Yarcé, and, to a certain extent, the black-
184 smiths do not perform the kantissé (Mossi salute). They have a dif-
576 ferent way of saluting naba. A curious legend explains this phe-nomenon. However bizarre it may seem, it is not lacking in interest, and we shall tell it just as it was handed down to us.

196 Friday night he stays at the home of Bangr'Naba Sambo. Very early
769 Saturday morning he returns home in time to be present when the Bend'Naba (chief of the drummers) comes to wish him a happy new year and a long life and to pray that Wenam (God) will spare him to [156] offer many more bascé (plural of basgha) in honor of his predecessors.

[431] It goes without saying that during the nights spent away from home the emperor receives many visitors and substantial gifts. The persons at whose homes he spends the night naturally give him the warmest possible welcome.

Preparatory sacrifices. These are performed inside the house of the Mogho Naba, and the details are known only to the following four persons: Mogho Naba, Emperor of the Mossi; Baloum Naba, chief steward and chief of pages; Zussoba Kassanga, chief eunuch and guardian of the harem; the pugtiéma, the first wife of the Mogho Naba.

196 It is known that animals are sacrificed, with the Mogho Naba
769 himself holding the victim and pronouncing the sacramental words.
782 Perhaps there is also worship of certain sacred fetishes. In any event, we are convinced that there is nothing involved in the ceremony which is contrary to the principles of French civilization since there is no human sacrifice. We should have liked very much to describe these ancient practices, but the secret has been well kept.

Celebration of basgha. As soon as the Mogho Naba appears in
196 front of the zango (antechamber), the Bend' Naba beats a drum while
769 calling the names of deceased naba, beginning with Naba Oubri, the
533 founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty. [157]

As soon as the Bend'Naba stops playing, he and his followers are served sagbo (millet cakes), mouf (rice), dam (millet beer), and nemdo (meat).

196 Likewise, the ministers and other court officials who come to
769 greet tabo (the new year) are given dam, sagbo, rice, and meat by
[554] the Mogho Naba. The food is distributed to the dignitaries in the order of precedence, and the rest is reserved for the Bilbalessé and other followers of the ministers.

[576] About eight-thirty, the ministers and court officials say wennatassé, "God be with us," which means good bye, and then they return home.

173 644 357 to be on the field of battle himself and for five years was unable to vanquish his enemy who was entrenched on a mountain and well supported by the local inhabitants.

After Warga had tried every means at his command to conquer his enemy, he hacked down the crops, which were almost ripe, and captured all the livestock that ventured down the mountain. In short, he devastated the country.

This succeeded so well that at last the local inhabitants, faced with famine, had to choose between the life of the chief they were sheltering and their own lives. Mamzi was therefore handed over and imprisoned at Saponé (1).

1. The principal canton town in the district of Ouagadougou.

During the five years of this difficult campaign, Naba Warga, aside from the warriors, had only a young boy to serve him since his wives were not present. The boy served as cook [160] and personal servant. In short, he performed the duties of a wife so well that Warga decided that he was worthy of some notice and decided to reward him.

When he had returned to his lands, he freed this faithful servitor after first giving him a wife. Then it occurred to him that several children in his court could perform the same services. He therefore ordered them to be recruited on a large scale, and these were the sogoné.

357 644 Every boy recruited to become a sogoné can expect to be given a wife, however little she may be worth, when he is freed.

[554 304] The sogoné have the same standing as the napagba,[1] and they wear the same ornaments. A group of bracelets worn on the wrists, in fact, distinguish the napagba and the sogoné from free women.

It is their duty to serve the naba. They form a half circle around the naba when he appears; they accompany him on his short outings; and they carry the scepter and all of the insignia of chiefdom. They serve drinks to the naba, fan him when he takes a nap [243] with fans called fika, make his bed, and do various errands. Likewise a naba never sends anyone but a sogoné to take a message to his wives.

1 [i.e. royal wives — Analyst]

that the same baby is returning. So, in order to induce him to remain on earth, they give him a significant name.

One of these is Yewayan (literally, "one who has returned"), meaning "Here he is, back again; it is he once more, and we recognize him."

The same name is used for all members of the same family.

Scars. When a child is a year or two old, the family calls in an old woman who draws more or less straight lines on his face (cheeks, chin, forehead, even the nose) with a razor. These marks vary according to region and are not [193] the same, for example, at Kaya as at Ouagadougou.

The design used most often, however, has three straight lines from forehead to chin and one or two horizontal lines running across the nose and joining the vertical lines on the cheeks.

Feeding. If a mother does not have enough milk, she goes very early in the morning to a tree, for example, the kamsaongo or wédega (of the family of gohine lianas), to ask for milk. She falls to her knees, and believing that she is addressing a living person, she makes her request humbly, but with what faith! It appears that the prayer is often granted, but the woman must never again go under the tree or she will lose her milk.

The question of choosing a nurse does not arise in Mossi country unless the mother dies. In that case, the little orphan is entrusted to a sister of the child's father. If she has been a mother, she too goes to the tree to ask for milk, as described above, even if her most recent delivery occurred years before. Finally, if the child thus nursed is a girl and survives, she becomes the property of her father's sister who will give her in marriage, later on, to the suitor of her choice.

III. Death

The importance of funeral ceremonies depends on the age and rank of the deceased.

Nitiema (aged persons). Upon the death of an [194] old man or woman, all the relatives who live in the village are assembled.

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554 The body is kept in the funerary chamber for a whole day, and then the burial ceremonies are begun. The eldest son and daughter in the family throw cowries in the tomb (1) so that their father

1. Different types of tombs. Among the Mossi there are several kinds of tombs. The yaobulga (tomb in the form of a well), the highly favored type, is reserved for all those, young or old, who die a natural death.

The sampogyaogo (from sampogré, "wound," and yaogo, "tomb") is rectangular in form and reserved for all those who die following a serious wound, snake bite, lightning, and drowning, or who fall on the field of battle. In these cases there is almost no kouré (funeral ceremony). Only the relatives shave their heads and receive visitors who bring them condolence. There are no celebrations or ceremonies. On the day of the second kouré, a little beer is served to visitors.

or grandfather may buy water "when he is thirsty and pay the tolls on the way to Eternity." The persons in charge of the burial take some of the cowries.

The relatives organize games and dances which go on for three or four days. Finally, everyone has his head shaved, and the date is set for the principal funeral ceremony. On that day, all of the relatives, sons, married daughters, close relatives, and grandsons, bring chickens, livestock, and cowries. All the inhabitants of the village are expected to prepare beer. Livestock and chickens are killed, and the meat is distributed to the people who come for the ceremony. Dances [195] go on for several days, and the dancers, as well as the drummers, receive cowries.

It should be noted that the grandchildren keep their chickens or livestock after slaughtering them and may dispose of them as they wish.

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The sinddo is performed only at the death of an aged person. It involves cutting up a living animal whose meat, as soon as it is cooked, is eaten by all the members of the bereaved family. During this operation a strong person holds the animal's muzzle shut; it is believed that a single cry from the creature means certain death for someone in the family.

The tomb of aged persons has the form of a well at the top; it is rectangular below, or at least wider, so the corpse may lie in it.

Ikanda (married man). The ceremony is much less impressive for a young husband. The deceased is simply washed, wrapped in a Peulh secco, and buried. A few chickens are killed. There are no dances at the second kouré.

Heads of families. After the deceased has been washed, dressed, wrapped in a mat or secco, and [196] laid out on the threshold of his hut (1), the lagda (undertaker) offers him the blood

1. The venré (opening). We have already seen that among the nakomsé a hole was cut through a wall of the house or through the wall surrounding the courtyard and that through this opening the body was carried to its last resting place.

In general, this is done for the father of a family. The body is laid out by the opening, and his eldest son and all his daughters (the daughters of the deceased and those of his brothers) must pass through the opening ahead of the corpse. On this occasion the girls tie branches around their hips in lieu of skirts, and the son removes his loincloth. The children of the deceased are held by the arms and legs and put by turn through the opening, in such a way that their bodies brush against the corpse.

The eldest son, by passing safely through the venré, proves to those present

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that he did not cause his father's death. The daughters who dare go through the opening, even those who are grown women, are greeted with bravos by the crowd. The wives receive generous gifts from their husbands. The reason for this is that no girl who had been pregnant before being led to her husband would dare to pass through the opening because the deceased and other kimsé (ancestral spirits) would strike her dead.

This is why some women disappear at the crucial moment, to the great shame of their husbands.

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The funerary hut is fumigated by burning a certain aromatic plant known as sompiga. The Bambara and the Wolof call it benguefala or benguefira. The same plant was widely used by the Europeans during the recent outbreak of yellow fever, either in an infusion, in a tisane, or mixed with the shower water.

of chickens which are killed at his feet. He pronounces some ritual words which may be summarized as follows: "Accept these chickens and these cowries and do not return; may everything you leave behind profit your heirs!;" etc.

The body is then carried away. On reaching [197] the tomb, the bearers carry the corpse around it three times and then place the body on the ground. The undertaker goes into the tomb and arranges the sleeping place. The mat is removed, and the body is handed in to him. The members of the family and other relatives at once begin to weep as the opening is closed with a stone, and the whole is covered with earth.

The eldest daughter of the deceased and his wives cover their bodies with ashes. The puglième (first wife) and the eldest daughter wrap leafy branches around their waists, and the rest of the family wear vines on their foreheads. This is the first mourning.

Forty or fifty days later the second funeral ceremony is held, accompanied by various games, the playing of tom-toms, killing

animals, beer, etc. (see the description above). This is the second mourning.

Dakonré (bachelor). Only his father and mother shave their heads. He is wrapped in a Mossi secco and buried without further ceremony. He is not even washed.

Bi-kouré (funeral for a newborn child). If the first-born child of a young mother dies, the girl returns to her family and remains there for thirteen days. Then she comes back to her husband, accompanied by some of her relatives. The latter bring chickens and guinea fowl to be served with the millet cake brought to the girl's husband. In return, the husband has chickens and guinea fowl killed and millet cake prepared, thus making an even exchange with his in-laws.

[198] Custom requires that the girl's relatives spend a night on the road before returning to their village. Even if their village is quite near they spend the night in the bush.

It should be added that if a second child dies at birth, there is no kouré.

Pagh'sin kataré biga (childless woman). There is no ceremony. She is buried in the same manner as the bachelor.

The Existence of God, Heaven, and Hell

The Moaga believes in the existence of a superior being, invisible or visible (the sun has long been considered as a "god" by many of them), who created the heavens, the earth, and all living things. This being is called Wende or Wenam (from wende, "world," and nam, "chiefdom"; thus, "Master of the World").

Although the Moaga sometimes attributes his misfortunes to the evil spells of his enemies, nevertheless he recognizes that nothing can be done without the consent of God. Hence he constantly invokes the name in every circumstance of his life, especially when he makes sacrifices.

Even the makers of fetishes, magicians, and sorcerers recognize this power and frequently invoke it.

There are certain Mossi who make no charms or fetishes and who are neither Moslems nor Christians. They harm no one, [199] forgive those who offend them, and attribute everything that happens to them -- for good or ill -- solely

Chapter 13

Dwellings of the Mossi Chiefs

342 554 787 We have seen, in an earlier chapter under "Labor Duties and Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Chiefs," how the dwelling of the naba is built and repaired. We know also that the naba like all his subjects, consults a soothsayer to select the site for his dwelling. He needs to know whether he should keep his father's establishment, build a new one on the site of his grandfather's home, or finally, if the spirits are not favorable, whether he might build on unoccupied land.

342 554 The establishment of a naba differed from those of his subjects in former times in the great number of huts included within it. Also, there was an empty ostrich egg on the roof of each hut.

The sketch which follows shows the home of a naba before the arrival of the French. Such houses exist even today in certain areas.

There were no native houses with terraces or clay roofs. To be sure, the Mogho Naba had one, but although it was copied from the Djenné style, [214] it had, aside from a few doors and tiny windows, only a single opening in the ceiling the size of a canari. This was supposed to admit air to the inhabitants, and it was blocked up during the winter.

The Ouidi Naba (first minister) and the Kamsaongo Naba (chief eunuch) also had tata, but they were smaller. The former kept the sacred water (nam-tibo) and the latter the wealth of his master, the emperor.

342 177 A description of the typical dwelling of the Moaga will be given later. At present, especially since the installation of the [French] government at Ouagadougou, virtually all of the province and canton chiefs have dwellings more or less of the European type. The present tata of the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and the Ouidi Naba at Ouagadougou, those of the Konkistenga Naba at Imasshoro and at Zoétigomdé, and that of the Lallé Naba at Koudougou -- to mention only the principal ones -- prove that real progress has been made in housing by the Mossi chiefs.

343 Chicken house and pens. Every head of a compound has a
235 small straw hut for fowl within his establishment. There is also a
231 small round hut of clay for the sheep and goats.

356 Repair of houses. When an establishment is damaged by rain or is in need of repair, the work is done by the residents (the head of the family and the dakompa, as well as the father's wives and brothers) with no help from outsiders. There is no pay beyond the usual meals. The head of the family merely says to the workers when the work has been completed: "N'fa nel toumtogo, imaou nian (thanks for the hard work, many thanks for the labor)."

[223] Chapter 14

Mossi Clothing

Dress of the Naba

241 In this chapter we shall examine the various modifications
554 and improvements in the dress of Mossi chiefs.
435 1. Before and during the first twenty years of the French occupation. (a) Zangoego pelga: a large robe made of narrow bands of cotton fabric, rather expertly woven. These robes, which are made and embroidered by specialists, used to cost from 70,000 to 100,000 cowries (1).

1. One hundred francs. The five-franc note is now worth 1,000 cowries. The silver five-franc piece was worth from 5,000 to 7,000 cowries, depending on the fluctuations of exchange.

(b) Karfo: a large robe, dark blue in color, made of the same material as the preceding (50,000 to 70,000 cowries).

(c) Noufa: a large robe and trousers, made of very fine fabric in a dark gray color. It had the value of two slaves or 70,000 cowries for the robe and 50,000 for the trousers.

291 554 435 (d) Zag'banko: a colored garment, varying in price between 40,000 and 50,000 cowries.

(e) Baourou ganga: a light gray blanket, valued [224] at 50,000 to 60,000 cowries, which can easily be made into robes and trousers.

[439] All these garments were imported by traveling Haoussa (Zangoéto) and a few Yarcé, the only traders at the time, who bought them in Gambaga (Gold Coast), the only known trading center at that time. As we have pointed out in an earlier chapter, the Mossi knew of no country other than their own.

There were, of course, some naba who wore only rough garments made of cotton strips woven locally.

Headgear. The inhabitants of Béré (a village of the province now ruled by the Gounga Naba) used to make caps, called manfo, which were highly prized by Mossi chiefs (priced at 2,000 to 3,000 cowries).

Some notables wore caps made at Wéogtinga (province of the Ouidi Naba) by the descendants of Naba Zombré, the twentieth successor of Oubri.

291 554 177 2. Modifications and improvements introduced since the establishment of the government of Upper Volta (1919). The various fabrics available in the European outlets and the fine white or blue bazin [fabric] are more and more being used to replace the clothing of former times. [225] These fabrics are made into robes, trousers, blouses, and forkia (this last is a kind of long blouse with wide sleeves, much prized by Senegalese [365] traders). Shirts of every conceivable color and style are hoarded in trunks and chests bought at the commissary or made locally by carpenters trained in European shops.

Many chiefs claim that garments made of cotton strips are heavy and cumbersome and impede walking.

[439] Oriental caps imported from the Gold Coast, dark red velvet hats, and even sun helmets are replacing the headgear of old.

The markatassé and mougou, rustic leather boots made by Mossi shoemakers are giving way to shoes, puttees, and leggings, [494] or to new types of boots and slippers -- the shoemakers of Djenné are now well known among the Mossi.

291 554 177 Finally, many chiefs (particularly province chiefs and dignitaries at the emperor's court) appear on feast days dressed in costumes ornately embroidered in gold and silver, products of Moroccan industry. Two of these ministers even wear with pride European costumes on these occasions.

Dress of the Mossi Subjects

292 Men. The accouterments and weapons of a Moaga who wished to be admired on festive occasions used to include the following: the koiglinga and the dandaogo (kinds of long blouses with sleeves); koursi(trousers) in dark blue; the karfo (seldom worn, [226] however, because of its high cost); a zangoégo [411] (large Haoussa knife); a manyanfo (cap); a logwaoga (quiver and arrows); and a boussan-zandé (iron club).

292 177 Today he wears the same garments made from cotton strips woven locally (except the karfo), but it should be noted that young men who return from the Gold Coast or neighboring colonies nearly always have clothing made of commercial fabrics. They may even -- and this often happens -- parade a second-hand overcoat. In the villages out in the bush, the large knife (zangoégo) is still worn, hanging from the shoulder by an albolé (ornament).

Some young men, however, usually traders in prosperous circumstances, dress in the fashion of the Sudanese who live in cities.

291 Women. A Moaga woman usually had only three skirts: (a) the skirt worn at home which was her working costume; (b) an indigo-blue skirt (fou-sablaga) which was reserved for holidays and for trips to the market; and (c) a white or dark-blue skirt cloth, trimmed with long fringes -- a kind of bambara dissa -- which she wore over her shoulders or over her head on ceremonial occasions. She replaced these articles whenever necessary.

[554 435] Only the wives of naba and of certain notables [227] were able to own, in addition to the forementioned skirts, a godé, a skirt of Haoussa origin and quite expensive (1).

1. Even today it costs between 55 and 100 francs.

301 As ornaments the Moaga woman had only red or yellow copper bracelets and the kindifou (a bright red bead). Even then only women of means could procure such ornaments. The [435] kindifou cost only 50 cowries a bead, but since cowries were monopolized by the naba, notables, and rakangba (prosperous Mossi), the beads were far too expensive for the small resources of the average Moaga woman.

Bracelets made of a special stone (a mixture of gray and white) and called manekagcé (manekaka in the singular) were worn only by the Yarbi (young Yarcé of both sexes). It is said [439] that these bracelets were peddled by the Kibissi (Habé), and they seem to have come from the Timbuktu area.

301 Silver bracelets were worn only by the dimbissi (descendants 554 of dima, that is, the family of the Mogho Naba), by kombemba (canton and province chiefs) and their descendants, and, finally, by prominent persons who were in favor at court.

291 At the present time, especially at Ouagadougou, the women 177 adorn themselves with garments of all kinds (skirts of native material, bazin, godé, and other fabrics, as well as skirts from stores). Some have even adopted the blouse and ample robe affected by [352] elegant Sudanese [228] women. Many now own trunks which replace the sacks formerly used to store their clothing.

291 The Senegalese handkerchief, a head scarf, is now con- 178 sidered absolutely indispensable. In rural areas there is an increasing desire to dress better. More cotton is grown. Girls and women from the bush buy glass beads of all colors when they come to Ouagadougou to work, and they wear them around their necks or around their hips in the manner of Bambara women.

416 Although the "mirror" used to be the clear water of springs and brooks, there is hardly a woman today who does not have one or two mirrors. Finally, a bit of elegance is added to the wild 301 beauty of the women by silver earrings, bracelets, and amulets sewed in a panther skin -- these are becoming a passion with Mossi peasant women.

291 It should not be inferred from the above that the Moaga always feels obliged to wear clothing at home. Any time that he has no need to go out or to visit a friend or relative at some

133 are bordered with hills. Nevertheless, it may be said that Mossi country is flat. It is covered with the classic bush of the Sudan with [137] its small shrubs and tall grass interspersed with bastard mahogany, /7/ huge trunks of the baobabs, and tamarind and silk-cotton trees, thicker on the banks of the Volta rivers, thinner around the villages.

241 The country is quite fertile and easily provides for its inhabitants. 262 The various kinds of millet grow well, especially the small white variety (Pennisetum spicatum) which, mashed and boiled, is the staple of the diet and sorghum, or large red millet, which is used to prepare the famous beer of the country. The horses eat the latter kind, although they prefer the large white millet. Around the huts maize grows well in soil fertilized by the daily accumulation of waste. It is a welcome source of grain when the millet reserves of the previous year are running low and the current harvest has not yet matured. Maize fields are surrounded with a double row of sorghum and often [283] with a double row of a fiber plant called bérensé, a sort of hemp which the natives use to make ropes. After the maize has been harvested, the field is planted with previously prepared tobacco seedlings. Finally, the sunken areas created when huts are built, as well as all slightly damp places, are planted with gombo, okra, which is highly valued as a sauce ingredient.

[311] During the rainy season no piece of land remains unused around the villages, and when the red millet ripens and the ears join across the path, passage becomes difficult. Even the hut roofs bear all kinds [415] of calabash plants. These supply the housewives with gourds that fulfill the purposes served by our plates, dishes, glasses, and basins; the travellers with their flasks; the snuff-takers with their boxes; and the sorcerers with their spirit-calling instruments. The large gourds that are used to make drums grow among the shoots of maize. In the marshes near the watercourses where water lies stagnant, rice fields are planted, but rice is a luxury food, hard to cultivate because of [554] the care it requires. The natives use it only on feast days or when they wish to honor a distinguished guest. Cotton is sown in damp places among the stalks of large red millet, and it is harvested much later. Peanuts and peas also take up part of the cultivated land, while beans creep along the ground between the shoots of small millet. Peppers, sesame, the indigo plant, yams, manioc, sweet potatoes, and a small

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwellings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the basement. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

695 The procedure was the same for all, men and women. The sons
681 of nabas, the nakomsé, however, were neither tried nor punished in
554 public. They were not tied with ropes, but with strips of fabric; and if condemned to death, they were hanged rather than clubbed to death. In any case, complaints against them were extremely rare. The sons of a powerful naba could do anything with impunity.

681 For examples, here are a few crimes and their respective punishments. Of course, there was no written code, no formal scale of penalties. Everything depended on custom and on the whim of the judge. Thus, the wealthy could obtain sentences in their favor by
696 paying the judges, and thieves could avoid punishment by sharing
691 their loot with the naba. Otherwise, a thief caught in the act was
685 flogged, sometimes to death. He was condemned to several months in irons, and exposed to public ridicule before the naba's hut; he had to restore what he had taken, and his family was held responsible. If he repeated the offense, he was led to the marketplace with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and dolo /beer/, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree. In Ouagadougou he was sometimes made a eunuch instead. This was almost the equivalent of a death sentence, because the operation was carried out in such barbarous fashion that death often ensued. French justice more leniently imprisons the thieves, a cause of complaint by honest people who find the punishment too mild.

682 In case of willful murder, the killer was put to death; if he could
683 not be found, a member of his family was executed in his place.
672 In case of a brawl, no attempt was made to determine who had started the fight or who was in the right. (Manslaughter was punished by a fine paid to the victim's family. The right /26/ of self-defense was, of course, recognized. If blows and wounds had been inflicted, the adversaries were put in irons.)

681 Old women were often accused of being witches and of eating
683 children's souls. If their crime was considered proved, if the sorcerers
888 consulted declared some old woman guilty of a baby's death, she was put to death in very cruel fashion: a second opening was made in a clay pot so that her head could be put completely within it; then the pot was heated intensely and placed over the head of the unfortunate woman.

685 If a goat or sheep caused damage to a field, the animal could be killed on the spot. The owner had to be notified, but he was not

562 girl is used to pay debts; a man borrows on the promise of giving his
587 daughter in marriage. She will be handed over, often with no bride
567 price other than the borrowed sum; and, contrary to the custom noted above, since she is considered a slave, her first daughter does not belong to the grandfather. A girl may also be given in exchange for her enslaved brother or uncle, who thus recovers his freedom. A man may be seriously ill and call a doctor who agrees to treat him on the condition that the patient's daughter be given to him if he gets well. The father does recover, and the girl is given in marriage to the fortunate doctor. Exchange of daughters also takes place: a native may give his daughter in marriage to another, who in turn gives him his own.

562 A girl is given in marriage by her mother only if she was born out
587 of wedlock, and her father is thus theoretically unknown. The sisters
818 of certain nabas are the only ones permitted to choose their husbands
554 according to their own wishes and to leave them when they please.
593 The fickle existence they lead is easy to imagine! In all other cases the girl is given in marriage by her father, or by his heir if the father is dead. (1) The mother is not consulted, but since she cares for the

754 1. It would be onerous and indeed impossible to list all the various situations that may arise. The sorcerers quite often interfere, and who knows what goes through a sorcerer's mind! One case among many: a woman bore a daughter after raising several others who died immediately following marriage; the father consulted the sorcerer to find out whether he should promise this last daughter in marriage. The sorcerer stated that she must be left free to choose her own husband, or else she would die like her sisters. The father left her free.

daughter until the latter marries, she may through advice, promises, or even threats dissuade her from a certain match /29/ or welcome her if she runs away from a husband to whom she was given against her will.

Chapter 2. Industries and Trading

443 Such are the everyday tasks of all Mossi. To these must be added visits to the marketplace all through the year, and during the dry season work performed by certain guilds or certain individuals, in short, the various industries practiced by the Mossi.

443 571 /53/ Every self-respecting Mossi, be it man or woman, child or elder, must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look... and to be looked at if he can don some handsome new clothes. To see the natives in their best finery, one must go to the markets which follow important feast days. At those times the marketplace is thronged with Yarsé and Peul as well as Mossi, and they all vie with each other in the richness and originality of their costumes. At other times people go to market on business, except for a few individuals who go there only to be admired even on ordinary days.

443 Every community of any importance holds a market every three days. Everything is arranged so the markets will not be too far distant from each other, and the villages near to one another will not hold markets on the same day to avoid competition. A native may, if he wishes, spend all his time at market, sometimes in one village, sometimes in another, for a market is always being held not far from where he lives. All the markets are not of equal importance. Some villages of no great consequence in themselves are located at the [554] crossroads of several routes followed by caravans and become important trading centers. The following Mossi markets are said to be especially popular: Pwitenga, Kaya, Rakay, Bélousa, Mané, Téma, Yako, and La.

Formerly these markets were slave-trading centers. Nowadays they deal mostly in horses, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, salt, kola nuts, native or European fabrics, and petty imported wares, such as matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers. Every important article has a section of its own. Butchers have theirs, and so have the traders in salt, fabrics, and kola nuts. All the millet beer is sold in one place, the sauce condiments and grain in another. The most important transactions, however, are carried on outside the marketplace, in the huts that travellers who intend to stay for awhile have hastily built in the Haoussa or Yarga quarter and sometimes among the Mossi. This is

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
[554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along with him.

775 One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits
761 to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neighbor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant. We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping. On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him. Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe. They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
[304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs, particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he
[764] dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained, and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the powerful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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they are so exclusively occupied with political or religious duties. In every case, they own fields and are dependent upon their produce for an important part of their subsistence.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga holds a market every third day; markets operate in nearby villages on the intermediate days. There are few full-time merchants; men usually market their wares themselves and trade in items of European manufacture. Except for the sale of meat, it is a man's wives who sell farm produce. For marketing her husband's surplus millet, a woman receives a gift when the market closes.

Markets are most active in the early hours of the morning when meat and farm produce are fresh. By afternoon only a few merchants stay on, trying to sell their remaining produce to late-comers at greatly reduced prices. Social satisfactions derived from participation in the market are greatly valued; it provides an opportunity for meeting friends and kinsmen and for exchanging gossip and observations on one another's dress, the crops, and current political developments. The market is a place for making loans and receiving small gifts from kinsmen and friends, for flirtations and the arrangement of rendezvous, and for that casual sort of social interaction which is one of the principal pleasures of life in the Yatenga.

The Mossi farmer is dependent on the co-operation of the members of his lineage both for the success of his individual economic endeavor and for their support if his crop should fail. To be assured of this support, he must contribute generously to the maintenance of his position in the intricate network of rights and obligations which describes the relationship of the individual to his kin group. A constant exchange of visits and presents, ceremonial and economic assistance, and presence and participation in the affairs of the lineage are necessary to maintain his status within this group.

The nature of the social, economic, and emotional dependence of the individual on his kinsmen, his affinal relations, and his neighbors is such that his social well-being and economic success may properly be regarded as depending as much on his skill in manipulating this complex web of relationships as on his specifically economic endeavors. When a man decides to forego a second weeding of his fields in order to prepare presents and make the journey to the funeral of a kinsman, he is making a choice which, considered in the total context of the culture, is realistically in accord with his own economic best interest.

The farmer feels equally dependent on the deceased members of his lineage, the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*). If he feeds them a chicken, they may steal the soul from a neighboring stand of millet and bring it to enrich his own field. If properly treated, they can be depended upon to protect his shea nut trees from the high winds which might otherwise

243 Africa as well, have two harvests, one in August and the other in November-December. The latter is by far the more important, but in order to prevent famine while waiting for it, these peoples also have early, quick-growing crops that yield from the second half of July, in August primarily, up to the middle of September. Among these crops, the most important may well be the maize sown in April and harvested in August, but there are others, such as the early millet mentioned above and also the large red millet. The most important crops (small millet, large white millet), on the other hand, are sown in May or earlier, or sometimes not until July, and harvested in November and December.

/472/ The Mossi also grow a little rice (mof in Mossi). The kind they cultivate is water rice /riz d'eau/. It is sown along watercourses and ponds. This is the most difficult crop to cultivate, according to the old men.

At the present day poor people grow a little rice. In former [354] times they did not grow it at all, and chiefs alone cultivated it. Even now, it is largely grown by chiefs.

Rice is sown in May after millet. The field is worked with a special daba, the souga, which is used to turn up the soil. Little holes are made with a koutiaga, and from seven to ten grains of rice are placed in each hole and covered with a little soil. Then, the rice is left to grow. It comes out of the ground at the end of seventeen days. During the rainy season, the waters of the watercourse or pond cover the small rice field. Weeds are removed, inside the water, with the ouaka. The harvesting is done during the second half of October, before the small millet and large white millet are gathered. The rice stalks are cut down with a kind of scythe and spread upon the ground to dry in the sun. Then, both men and women thresh it with sticks. Sometimes the stalks are taken into the soukala instead, left to dry for three days in the courtyard, and then threshed. [351] The straw is discarded. When there is only a little rice, it is kept in a canari. When there is a lot, it is stored in baskets which in turn are placed in little straw huts raised on stakes.

262 252 The Mossi, who in short grow very little rice, claim that they prefer millet to rice. Millet, they say, provides more energy. Rice is eaten boiled, with meat if possible, and the whole thing is served with peanut or gombo /Tr. okra/ sauce.

231 Donkeys are relatively numerous in Mossi territory. They are light grey in color, with a handsome black strip on the withers which extends down the right and left sides. The Mossi are very fond of [492] riding them. They do this, incidentally, all the way back, sitting on the donkey's rump, and it is a rather comical sight. They are beginning to use their donkeys in trading. Formerly they did not do this, since they did not engage in trading.

[435] The average price of a donkey is 25 francs.

Mule breeding is unknown among the Mossi. It is practiced in [492 439] Sokoto lands among the Haoussa, who sometimes bring mules into /Mossi/ territory.

As for horses, the Mossi have three races.

1. In the northeast there is a horse of rather large stature, from 1.50 to 1.60 meters in height, elegant, with delicate joints and lines recalling the true Arab horse. These horses, ridden too early and too recklessly by the natives, are soon worn out.

2. The southern horse, which is to be found in the southern part of the Ouagadougou circle and in the Tenkodogo residency. It is small in stature, thin, rather stocky. Better adapted to /491/ the Sudanese climate than the large northern horse, it possesses greater strength and endurance.

3. The Mossi horse proper, which seems to derive from a cross between the northern and southern races. It is small in stature, but strong-backed, vigorous, tough, and frugal. It is less handsome than the northern horse, but more attractive than the Boussansé horse. On the other hand, it endures the climate better than the former, less well than the latter.

231 435 A southern horse is worth from 80 to 100 francs, a Mossi horse is worth about 150 francs, and finally, a northern horse is worth from 200 to 400 francs. There are about 7,000 horses in the Ouagadougou circle.

231 The horses are kept in the villages during the dry season. They are given millet and peanut greens to eat. Grass is cut down in the bush and given to them when it dries. During the rainy season, the [554] horses are usually taken to the bush. Only the chiefs keep their horses in the soukala, where the animals are brought fresh grass, millet, water and salt. Other people take their horses to the bush and tie them beside their field so they may browse on the grass.

645 1. The Kamsoro Naba, chief of the eunuchs and prime minister, a sort of minister of the interior.

2. The Ouidi Naba, chief of the cavalry.

3. The Gounga Naba, chief of the infantry.

4. The Laralé Naba, guardian of the tombs of the Moro Nabas.

5. The Baloum Naba, major-domo and chief of the soroné (pages). He might be said to rule over the interior of the palace.

645 635 Those five ministers ruled over the five Mossi provinces that were administered directly: Kamsoro, Ouidi, Gounga, Laralé, and Baloum. As we can see, those provinces had no proper names, no names of their own, and each took the name of the dignitary who governed it. Thus, they were not true geographical or ethnic provinces, but artificial districts lifted out of an area that was both too extensively parceled out and too homogeneous to yield spontaneously anything but villages and cantons.

644 In addition to those five ministers, among which the Kamsoro Naba and Baloum Naba seem to have been the most important, there were other dignitaries and servitors, as follows: /569/

1. The Tamsaba or Kinsaba, high chief of the bodyguards.
2. The Samandé Naba, chief of the bodyguards.
3. The Pouy Naba, chief of the fetisheers.
4. The Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer.
5. The Dapouy Naba, chief of the servitors.
6. The Kambo Naba, subchief of the servitors.
7. The Bindé Naba, chief of the Moro Naba's drummers.
8. The Ouidianga Naba, chief of the grooms.
9. The Mendo Naba, chief or representative of the butchers.
10. The Dara Haba, chief of the markets.
11. The Kamboué Naba, executioner.
12. Finally, the Yarsé Naba, chief or representative of the Yarsé settled among the Mossi. The prestige he enjoyed actually ranked him immediately beneath the five ministers and the Tamsaba.

[554] "The various functions at the court of the Moro Naba," says Moulins, "are hereditary in the sense that their holders are always chosen by the sovereign among close relatives of the previous occupant in office.

664 554 "The wives of the Moro Haba never give birth or raise their children at his own place of residence, but only in one of the eunuch villages. In theory they do not stand above the wives of common natives, but in practice they enjoy high consideration among the Mossi, like all that is connected with the Moro Naba.

"The sons of the sovereign, once weaned, are entrusted to a province or canton chief who is put in charge of their education. [582] At the age of ten they are married and settled in a village, where they live, surrounded by a court, but without necessarily being given a territorial command.

"The prerogatives attached to the title of Moro Naba's son are vast as long as the monarch is alive. They grant the right to steal, to loot, and even to kill with impunity.

"Upon the death of the Moro Naba, his sons become mere nakomsé (sons of chiefs) whose position nevertheless remains quite privileged.

643 644 554 "One of the sons of the deceased sovereign, however, is granted special privileges. At the death of the Moro Naba, the latter's wives elect one of his young sons who adopts his name and, so to speak, perpetuates him. He has no /territorial/ command, but he is surrounded by a court similar to that of the Moro Naba, he enjoys respect almost equal to that paid to the latter, and he is a sacred figure. No one has the right to contradict him or to harm him.

644 554 "As for the Moro Naba's daughters, although in principle they do not stand above ordinary Mossi girls, in practice they are treated with the strictest respect by all natives. Once married, they have almost complete freedom of action vis-à-vis their husband, and they often take advantage of this to lead a most unruly existence.

643 766 "When the Moro Naba's death has been verified, his burial is carried out and followed by the funeral ceremonies, which are held in the same fashion as for a common native, with the sole difference /574/ that they have more brilliance and that the sacrifices are more sizable.

642 672 "For the whole duration of the interregnum, the land falls into a state of complete anarchy. Everyone has the right to kill, loot, and steal as he pleases. Convicts who are serving sentence are fully pardoned and set free.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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797 sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military service ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do
167 not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Moslems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far removed from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their return in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have recorded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

571 797 Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; besides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intan-
554 gible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to
566 note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-
[567] Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

797 Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi
291 youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the
515 Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisticated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner clothes and affect a different style of life.

794 The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans
577 because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers, benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing murder by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

794 Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Moslems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect), give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

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II

SOVEREIGNTY, KINSHIP, AND COMMUNITY

The Mossi restricted all important positions within the traditional political organization to persons who claimed lineal descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri, the ancient founders of the Mossi nation. Thus all the *Mogho Naamse, Dimdamba, Kombemba,* and *Tense Naaamse*—the heads of kingdoms, principalities, districts, and villages, respectively—claimed descent in the royal line. The bond of kinship among all important Mossi rulers was symbolized by membership in the lion clan (*Gegema*) and affiliated clans or *boodoo* founded by ancient members of the ruling families. Although the Mossi respected clan totems, they did not stress clan organization. They were more interested in membership in the segmentary lineages within the clans.[1] Yet not all Mossi groups stressed lineage affiliation. This was of supreme importance only for nobles whose membership in particular segments of ruling lineages gave them access to the *nam*—the power first possessed by the ancient founders, which is described by the Mossi as "that force of God which enables one man to control another." So important was the corporate possession of the nam by a ruling lineage that with few exceptions, membership in such a lineage gave a Moaga noble status.[2] Lineage segmentation gave some segments easier access to the nam, however, and resulting conflicts over sovereignty gave rise to the various Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and even districts.

Every Mossi ruling line attempted to legitimize its position by claiming the most direct descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. The descendants of the founder of a local ruling lineage would claim that he had been an elder son deprived of his patrimony by unscrupulous younger brothers, or an elder son disqualified by a physical handicap from receiving the nam. Some ruling lineages even claimed that their founders had been elder sons who had voluntarily forsaken the problems of government and established new districts for themselves. Whenever tradition recounted that a younger son had indeed founded a kingdom or district, it was invariably said that he

634 tured slaves, whom he settled behind his compound and in separate villages
173 under their own chiefs. He also welcomed refugees from wars in other territories and established them in special villages under their own chiefs.

631 The Dimdamba followed a similar practice in establishing power and
173 control. According to Cheron, when Mogho Naba Koudoumie sent his son Tiraongo to conquer the Ninisi of Boussouma, the Ninisi defended themselves fiercely. Tiraongo's advance was thus very slow until he found a Ninisi named Wine, dressed in a panther's skin and hiding in a hole, "who on the promise that his life would be saved, consented to serve as guide to Tiraongo and to make propitiatory sacrifices to the divinities of the country. Thanks to him, the Mossi were able to progress to Somtongande."[6] Boulsa tradition recounts that when Naba Namende left Ouagadougou as the Kourita of Mogho Naba Oubri and took possession of their province, he placed his sons at the head of the principal villages "in order to control it [Boulsa] better."[7] One son was even sent to rule over a village at the request of the local Tengsoba.

634 The villages that made up a Mossi district were usually ruled by chiefs
613 who belonged to sub-lineages of the local ruling lineage. These village
778 chiefs and the members of their lineage formed a noble class, the *nakomce*
[565] ("children of the Naba"). As long as a lineage held the nam of a district, all of its sub-lineages had all the privileges of the noble class, regardless of whether they had charge of villages. But if the Mogho Naba deprived
[558] a ruling lineage of the nam by deposing the district chief, all its members were reduced to commoner status. Such people still traced their descent from the Mogho Naba who was the ancestor of their lineage founder, but this relationship ceased to be important unless the lineage recovered the nam of the district. If it did not, the former ruling lineage officially lost its ancient link with the royal clan within a few generations and became a nondescript local group.

634 The place of a deposed royal lineage was usually taken by the relatives
613 of the nobles who subsequently acquired the nam of the district. These
778 newcomers were genealogically closer to the ruling Mogho Naba, and
557 formed the new nakomce of the district. The new district chief sometimes
558 sent his sons to rule over the villages under his command. But if the village chiefs did not suffer the same fate as their lineage head at the hands of the Mogho Naba, the new district chief often permitted them to retain their posts. Thus they retained possession of the nam but lost their noble status. They served the new district chief in a political sense much as the Tengsoba served him in a ritual sense.

554 The plight of deposed district nakomce shows quite clearly the distinc-
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tion made by the Mossi between kinship and sovereignty within their governmental system. Kinship was the basis on which the ruling class was formed. However, sovereignty itself, although associated with kinship, was not unalterably linked with it. When a ruling Mossi kin group held the nam, its subgroups were linked by bonds of prestige. But once this group lost the nam or access to the nam, its component subgroups began to drift away. That this situation could exist shows the true nature of the relationship between sovereignty and kinship within the Mossi political system.

There were other chiefs in Mossi districts who had never had either a lineal or a collateral relationship with any lineage of the ancient royal clan.[6] These men were the descendants of provincial ministers. They became chiefs for the same reasons that the sons of ruling sovereigns became chiefs. When a Mogho Naba sent his sons to replace deposed district chiefs, the young men were usually accompanied by a full complement of administrators. These administrators, mostly younger sons of administrators at Ouagadougou who would not normally succeed their fathers, often automatically replaced the administrators of the former chiefs. But if, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the new chiefs elected to retain the administrators of their predecessors, they assigned village chieftainships to the newcomers. They might also settle them in independent hamlets and furnish them with wives and slaves. For chiefs in this category, kinship did play an initial role in the accession to power; but since they were not related to the district chief, they never gained noble status. Socially, they were comparable to chiefs who were former nobles; as in the latter's case, their kinship ties with the administrators at Ouagadougou gradually lost their significance.

There were yet other kinds of chiefs or men who rated the title Naba in Mossi districts. They included: the descendants of aboriginal chiefs, the chiefs of alien groups, and the chiefs of the Mossi refugee groups that had left other districts because of disputes over the nam. In districts where there were large groups of the autochthonous Ninisi, there were Ninisi "chiefs"; in most cases, however, these "chiefs" were really the senior Tengsobadamba of the villages. In most other districts, the sole Ninisi "chief" was the official Tengsoba of the district chief. This man had ritual power but no political power. Yet he was called Naba, because the Mossi thought that all persons in positions of command or prominence must be named chiefs. Villages made up of aliens (Busansi, Gurunsi, Yarse, and occasionally Fulani) had chiefs in the true sense of the word. These men were granted access to the nam by the district chiefs, and their

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the same royal ancestors. A Mossi village chief was likewise the head of his babissi and ex officio head of all the other babissi in his village that belonged to his boodoo. As the official Boodkasma of his village's ruling lineage, the village chief held junior or senior status in relation to other village chiefs of the same boodoo who were also the Boodkasemdamba of their respective lineage segments.

Possession of the nam influenced the pattern of seniority within lineages and lineage segments. In most cases, seniority was based on age and generation. Thus, the oldest man of the oldest generation was the Boodkasma, and his office devolved upon the next oldest man when he died. But within the ruling lineages and their segments, the man who held the nam, whether young or old, was automatically senior to all others. This does not mean that these ruling lineages did not recognize age and generational seniority. For example, whenever a chief died and sovereignty returned to the lineage as a corporate group, the senior noble of the senior generation became the acting Boodkasma and lineage head. Like all Boodkasemdamba, he managed the affairs of his group, but only until a new chief was elected. The new Boodkasma, however, sometimes delegated some of his social rights and ritual obligations to this elder, who was often regarded as the unofficial or semi-official Boodkasma of his lineage. Similarly, the senior nobles of all segments of the ruling lineage were also regarded as Boodkasemdamba. Because they were so regarded and because of the role they played, these men seldom came into conflict with the district chief. He gave them a certain amount of leeway in dealing with the everyday affairs of their group. It was understood by all, however, that nothing should jeopardize the most important asset of the lineage—the nam. Therefore, the chief was obeyed in all important matters involving the noble lineage of the district. In such matters he listened to no one; for, as one district chief said, "Once I have received the nam from the Mogho Naba, no man in this district stands above me!"

This dominance of political relations over social relations was made clear by the behavior of commoners toward ruling nobles on the one hand, and of nobles among themselves on the other. Commoners showed greater respect and deference toward members of the ruling babissi than toward persons belonging to other noble babissi. Thus, they were more respectful to the district chief's father's brothers, his siblings, and his children than to his more distant relatives. Within the noble lineage itself, everyone had to respect the chief as the holder of the nam, but otherwise the generational principle of respect and deference was maintained. The eldest nobleman of the eldest generation received deference from all others (excluding the

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613 chief), and the hierarchy of respect descended to the youngest nobleman
571 of the youngest generation. Very often, the full-grown son and presumed
778 heir of the district chief had to kneel in respect to a distantly related younger man of an elder generation. Of course, this deference ceased if and when he became chief. If he did not receive the nam, he continued to show deference to all his lineage elders. This distinction between nam and boodoo was
[578] a source of potential conflict within the ruling lineages. The people usually accepted the implications of both principles, but when they did not, there were dynastic quarrels and territorial secessions.

622 The age and generational principles also operated within non-noble
613 ruling lineages, but here too they were often complicated by the possession
554 of the nam. Those village chiefs who had lost their noble status but re-
778 tained the nam acted as official Boodkasemdamba of their local lineage
571 segments and had considerable influence over their lineage although they did not control all its segments. Each lineage segment had its own Boodkasma, who normally ran its affairs. But because of the importance of the nam in Mossi life, the Boodkasemdamba deferred to the village chief in
[565] important matters pertaining to their own boodoo. However, the generational principle was followed within the local boodoo. Almost no one deferred to the children of the village chief, who, after all, were not nakomce.

613 The situation within commoner lineages that did not hold the nam was
571 quite different. The age and generational principles obtained within the
778 lineage segments of these boodoo, but never *across* the segments, as they did across the babissi. These segments were more autonomous. Each had its own Boodkasma, who looked after it without deferring to anyone. This autonomy was all the more pronounced since the segments of non-noble lineages tended to be scattered throughout a district. They interacted socially and politically only when they were physically close. In any case, in the absence of the nam, the segments of non-noble lineages had no reason to remain together; they tended to lose their hierarchical quality and to become equal and separate.

613 As would be expected in such circumstances, not all Mossi lineages paid
173 the same attention to their genealogies. Noble lineages kept track of their
778 actual or putative ancestors, whereas non-noble lineages tended to ignore them and to let geographical proximity determine meaningful kinship ties. This loss of interest in exact genealogies was found even among lineages that had lost the nam of a district and with it their nobility, but still retained the nam of a village. Members of the minimal units in such lineages competed actively for the village nam and were interested in fairly recent an-

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cestors. They did not remember how they were related unless they happened to have a common grandfather or great-grandfather who had held the nam. The differential value thus placed on genealogies by the noble and non-noble lineages was due in most cases to the differential access of these lineages to the strategic resources of Mossi society. People who held the nam and belonged to noble lineages enjoyed special claims to goods and services. Those whose lineages did not hold the nam had no such privileges.

Because Mossi society was basically patrilineal, a man shared in the status and the corporate assets of his patrilineage. Conversely, a man had no access to the status or resources of his mother's patrilineage except for some ritual rights and duties that accrued to him as a *yagenga* (a sister's or daughter's son). These rights and duties included residence in the home of a maternal patrilineage during childhood, attendance at sacrifices to the mother's patrilineal ancestors, the settling of quarrels between maternal kinsmen, and ritual license to seize specific items of property from these relatives. This license dramatized the *lack* of access rather than *freedom* of access to the property of maternal relatives.

When a man's maternal relatives controlled the nam of the territory in which he lived, he could improve his social and economic position. In many cases, a young man who had gone to live as a "stranger" with a noble uncle or grandfather remained with these relatives. His privilege to remain was sanctioned by the Mossi belief that a boy's maternal ancestors would wreak vengeance on any person who tried to evict him from the village from which his mother had been "sent into the bush" (given away as a wife). By using various strategies and subterfuges, the "stranger" obtained wives through his maternal relatives and used their land and other resources. After several generations the lineal descendants of the "stranger" frequently became indistinguishable from their maternal relatives, although such cases were not often formally acknowledged. Whether these "sisters' children" ever managed to obtain the nam of their mother's patrilineage is a moot point, because in theory they could not. Yet, also by Mossi definition, a man could never inherit rights and duties in his mother's patrilineage; however, it is known that this did happen. It is possible that the close check kept by the ruling lineage on its genealogy made usurpation impossible. Yet I know of several cases in which candidates for chiefship feared competition from men whose descent actually barred them from the nam.

The son of a nobleman and a commoner woman seldom attached himself permanently to his maternal patrilineage, although he retained all of his customary rights, privileges, and duties in it. Occasionally, noblemen did attach themselves to their maternal relatives, but those who did had

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usually been banished from their patrilineage for some illegal act or had voluntarily left home after a dispute over inheritance of the nam, goods, or women.

The fact that noble lineages often absorbed sisters' sons was only one of the reasons why such lineages survived and expanded, even if only at the expense of other lineages within the local society. Another reason for this growth was that the nobles, possessing the nam and its prerogatives, received more wives than the commoners. They had more children and thus multiplied more rapidly. Mossi lineages were generally exogamous through their whole depth, but exogamy became increasingly mandatory as the segments became smaller. Marriage within a maximal lineage was permitted only when some of its members had moved so far away from its original locality that the original ties were either forgotten or ignored. The Mossi have myths in which the lineage founder gives his overly numerous descendants permission to marry certain of their relatives. Even so, if a marriage was actually found to have occurred between distant relatives, appropriate sacrifices had to be made to the ancestors.

Marriage was also forbidden between persons who could trace a common maternal ancestor. But because the time depth here was very shallow, total bilateral exogamy was practiced to a depth of only four or five generations. Of course, the differential concern with genealogies between those who had access to the nam and those who did not, had an effect on the extent to which exogamy was practiced.

Most Mossi marriages were based on an exchange of women between two lineages linked by a long-term series of reciprocal exchanges of goods and services. Women were regarded as the most valuable part of this system. In theory, only the Boodkasma of a babissi had the right to give a woman as a wife to another lineage. However, the initiators of the reciprocal relations between lineage segments were often babissi heads, Yirisobadamba (heads of nuclear families), or individual lineage members. When a man from one lineage "made friends" with a member of another and rendered him a service or received a favor from him, their respective lineages were considered to be involved. The corporate nature of the lineage segment was acknowledged by all persons engaged in reciprocal relations, and the relations between two individuals were seen as relations between their lineages.

When a man wished to give a daughter to a friend as a wife, he had to consult his Boodkasma, who then gave the woman to the friend's Boodkasma. The latter accepted the woman as a wife for the lineage rather than for the man involved. The lineage retained its rights *in gene-*

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*175 648 642 gions to ascertain whether the people desired reunification. Duglas reported his findings to the National Assembly:

> You know as well as I do that the Mossi are proud of their past. Thanks to a political and social organization without peer in West Africa, they have known peace since the Middle Ages, in an Africa ravaged by war and depopulated by the slave trade. . . . This ancient land also desires prosperity and modernization. To achieve this its voice must be heard, not only in the National Assembly but particularly in the Grand Council [the highest consultative body] of French West Africa. The Upper Volta must have its own General Council.[20]

*175 †648 The law authorizing the reconstitution of the Upper Volta as a separate territory was promulgated on September 4, 1947. The non-Mossi populations of the projected territory feared Mossi domination and voiced their opposition in the Assembly, but in the end an accord was reached. The Mossi chiefs next petitioned the French government to pay for the rebuilding and refurbishing of Ouagadougou. François Bouda, one of the few traditional Mossi nakomce to become an elected representative of the Mossi, reminded the members of the Council of the French Union of what had occurred in 1919. He stated that his own father had recruited thousands of men to make bricks for "Bancoville" (an epithet for Ouagadougou; most of its buildings were of sun-dried bricks called *banco*) because Governor Hesling "never considered the possibility of purchasing cement, which was [464] not even expensive. Forced labor was easy to recruit, and no one thought that the day would come when it would be gone."[21] Bouda said that the Government should now help the new territory to modernize the capital.

D'Arboussier, an RDA delegate in the Assembly, declared that he would support the bill, if only because in the past the French government had attempted "to make a crack race horse out of an ordinary horse, and in so doing had made it a decrepit mare."[22] Funds for rebuilding Ouagadougou were finally voted, and the "Bancoville" of French West Africa began to take on a new look with wide avenues, large administrative buildings, official residences, and even a new palace for the Mogho Naba.

*175 643 631 ●554 †648 With the reconstitution of the Upper Volta, the Mogho Naba and his chiefs attained their highest prestige since the conquest. The chiefs even had strong influence over the Mossi representatives to the organs of the French Union, because of the decisive support they had granted them in the elections. But this increase in prestige was to be short-lived. The chiefs were no longer the sole representatives of their people, and the Mossi were no longer isolated from events in other parts of the Upper Volta, or for that

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matter from events in French West Africa and the rest of Overseas France. All projects undertaken in the Upper Volta became of interest to the other units of the French Union because the funds to support them had to be voted on by representatives of the whole, including not only local Mossi and non-Mossi, but also Africans in other territories, French colonial populations outside Africa, and the metropolitan French.

The conditions that were to have the greatest effect on the position of Mossi chiefs were created in January 1949, when elections were held to choose the Upper Volta's first General Council. The major parties involved in the election were the Mossi-dominated Union Voltaïque; the Entente Voltaïque, a local section of the RDA representing the interests of such non-Mossi populations as the Lobi, Fulani, Bobo, Senufo, and Gurunsi; and a group of smaller ethnic parties such as the Union Lobie and the Indépendants. The campaign reflected all the tensions and conflicts prevalent among the administration, the RDA, the non-Mossi parties, and the Union Voltaïque. Both the Union Lobie and the Indépendants spoke out against what they feared to be Mossi domination, and accused the Mossi chiefs of "neo-feudalism." The Union Voltaïque accused the RDA of radicalism, of associating with communists, and of hostility to the chiefs. It cited as evidence the deposal of several Agni and Senufo chiefs in the Ivory Coast by partisans of the RDA. The RDA, in turn, charged the Union Voltaïque with supporting reactionary, feudal-minded chiefs, and thus with opposing the true interests of the Mossi and other Voltaic peoples. Furthermore, it accused Masson (Governor Mouragues's executive officer) of encouraging the cercle commanders to fight against the RDA, and of jailing about 300 RDA members at Bobo-Dioulasso.[22]

As expected, the Union Voltaïque won most of the seats in the more populous Mossi section of the Upper Volta, and thus was able to dominate the political institutions created by the administration. Nevertheless, the election produced deep political scars in the Upper Volta, and lasting enmity between the RDA and the Mossi chiefs.

During the years that followed the reunification of the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs as such were not accorded any specific status by the administration. Beginning in 1953, bills designed to regularize the status of the chiefs were submitted by Mossi delegates to the Assembly of the French Union and to various other organs of the French Union, but to no effect. The Mossi chiefs meanwhile sought to define their own position. In 1952, under the leadership of the Mogho Naba, they formed an organization called the Union of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta. Article IV of the statutes which they filed with the territorial administration reads as follows:

their genealogies and traditions. The Mogho Naba was pleased by the recitation and thanked the drummer.

Later that day, the Mogho Naba presented himself in the courtyard of the district chief's compound to be saluted by the village chiefs and by the heads of lineages. They came to him in the traditional way, rubbing their palms and bending their foreheads to the ground. He addressed them, and in response they snapped their fingers in the customary manner. Then, one by one, the village chiefs and the lineage elders came to their monarch and gave him presents of money which ranged from 50 to 200 francs. The Mogho Naba paid little attention to the sums given, being more interested in this act of homage and fealty. However, he listened carefully as each donor announced his name and rank within the official hierarchy or village. He later thanked them collectively and departed. This ceremony, while not very elaborate, differed little in detail from those characteristic of the traditional Mossi's relationship to their Mogho Naba. The new element here was that the monarch was traveling around his domain, establishing a close relationship with his chiefs and subjects, whose support he needed for his modern political alliances.[25]

The Mogho Naba continued to hold the morning ceremony at court, even though it was rapidly losing its traditional function and becoming of major interest only to visitors. He also continued to hold those ceremonies associated with individual appointments to the nam and with traditional sacrifices. Unknown to many was the fact that traditional authorities at court still judged legal cases which many Mossi refused to take to the Europeans.

In contrast to the Mogho Naba, the traditional provincial ministers now lost most of the power they had held in the pre-conquest period, and all the duties they had acquired in the immediate post-conquest era. As we have seen, one minister, the Baloum Naba, had entered politics at the suggestion of the Mogho Naba, but even he was now relegated to the entourage that accompanied the Mogho Naba and the European administrators on visits to the ministers' former provinces. The increased number of European administrators had made these ministers superfluous.

The district chiefs retained some prestige after the war. They could still judge legal cases, with the understanding that the litigants were free to go to the Europeans if they so desired and had to be sent there in serious cases. Their major problem was that a more efficient administration was taking a greater interest in district affairs. For the first time since the conquest, officials were visiting some of the more remote villages. No longer were they said to "act as locusts"—that is, to appear periodically to garner supplies and men from the districts and then disappear until the next onslaught. Instead, they appeared regularly to collect taxes and to take censuses, and

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they were kept informed of almost everything that occurred in the districts by their secretaries and "friends" (usually war veterans who visited the administrative headquarters on business).

Not all the district chiefs accepted with equanimity their gradual loss of power. Many of them had accepted at face value the joyful refrain of the elite and the politicians that the "land was cooling"—i.e., that the rigors of colonialism were over. They welcomed the liberal laws of 1946, and believed that they would regain the power lost by their fathers. Thus, they were among the most surprised persons in the Upper Volta when the easing of colonial rule brought with it more French supervision rather than less. From the standpoint of political power, most district chiefs had been better off in the days of the "locusts." At least the locusts came and went, whereas progressive government slowly but irrevocably eroded their power.

The village chiefs, as those members of the traditional Mossi hierarchy who had the closest contact with the people, felt the postwar administrative changes much more keenly than the other chiefs. They found it increasingly difficult to deal with war veterans, adherents of formal religions, and other people who had lost respect for traditional values and practices.[28] Whereas few Mossi would have refused to visit or to pay allegiance to the Mogho Naba or to their district chief, with whom they had little personal contact, many did refuse to have political relationships with those village chiefs whom they neither liked nor respected.

The rural Mossi, upon whom the position of the Mogho Naba and his chiefs ultimately depended, did not fully comprehend the postwar changes in the Upper Volta, and were initially willing to look to their chiefs for guidance. Most of them referred to their newly won civil rights in the French Union by what they called *soguem minga,* which may be translated as "possession of one's self," "liberty," or "liberation." To the majority of them, however, the reforms meant chiefly the end of forced labor. They were more than willing to leave the new political affairs to their chiefs, despite the assurance of the elite that they could now participate in the governmental processes. Dupont wrote in a romantic vein about the introduction of political reforms in the Upper Volta:

> Can we truly speak of a change for the better in this country? Yes! A page has been turned, the last in a chapter. A new chapter has just begun, and I was the amazed witness of this beginning. . . . One must say, in France's favor, that she did not merely engage in beautiful speeches, but that her liberating decrees deeply modified the life of the natives. Gone is the export of laborers; gone are the uncontrolled prestations; gone the requisitions of produce which the peasants had to buy elsewhere at a higher price and resell at a loss; gone the sales in which the collective price given to the district

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As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan politics, their power increasingly eclipsed that of their chiefly benefactors and of local French administrators. For example:

> A local chef de poste summoned the district chiefs to bring their potential draftees for the war in Algeria early in the morning on a specific date to be examined by medical officers. Those chiefs who looked upon any summons with a trepidation born of their past experience with prewar administrators, arrived at the headquarters as early as 5:30 A.M. on the morning in question, bringing their young men with them. Many of these chiefs, whose only means of transportation was their slow-moving ceremonial horse, spent the night en route to be there at dawn. More sophisticated chiefs coming from similar distances left on the same morning and arrived at about 8:00 A.M., the hour when the administrator himself was first seen stirring in his residence. One chief, a war veteran, rode up on his bicycle at about 8:45 A.M. in a most unchiefly manner and became the butt of jokes from the other waiting chiefs. Another district chief, who was an elected representative, did not arrive until about 9:30 A.M., and he was greeted on arrival by the administrator. This man had only about half a mile to travel, and he did so in his car. His colleagues greeted him with a mixture of jokes, feigned awe, and surprise, and some of them addressed him as "Mogho Naba" and "Governor."[29]

Another example of the shift in the balance of power was the relationship that developed between Joseph Conombo and the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba had nominated and supported Conombo as a candidate for deputy to the National Assembly. He was elected, and later became Secretary of the Interior in the Mendès-France Government of 1954. He thus had access to power undreamed of by the Mogho Naba. Being a Moaga as well as a good politician, he never flaunted his authority before his traditional chief; nor did the Mogho Naba try to exercise his traditional powers over him. But their behavior toward each other clearly demonstrated that they were both aware of the shift in power, even though they were both too wise and too polite to make an issue of it.

Other political forces also jeopardized the position of the chiefs. For example, as head of the Union Voltaïque, Conombo had an honored position within a Paris-based African parliamentary group called the Indépendants d'Outre-Mer (IOM). He would have held an even more important position within this group if he had had wider support among the non-Mossi in the Upper Volta. But his power was limited by the presence and competition of the MDV, which, while Mossi-supported, was anti-chief; the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution Africaine (MPA), an anti-Mossi and anti-RDA party formed in 1954 by Nazi Boni of the Bobo ethnic group and supported by some officials in the administration; and the Parti Démocratique Voltaïque (PDV), a local branch of a now less radical RDA

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created out of the defunct Entente Voltaïque. In an attempt to gain the support of these parties and of the young Mossi intellectuals who, while anti-chief, were not yet willing to join the PDV, Conombo officially scrapped the Union Voltaïque in 1955 and formed the Parti Social d'Education des Masses Africaines (PSEMA).[50] The party pledged to promote social reform and the right of Africans to manage their own affairs, and to struggle against family, regional, and racial hatreds. But it did not win the support of the non-Mossi; nor did it attract many young Mossi, who did not believe that it had discarded the mantle of the chiefs. Conombo's readiness to ally himself with anti-chief forces, however, did make it obvious to the chiefs that when politicians were out to gain power, they did not always take the interests of the chiefs into account.

In 1956, when a *loi-cadre* granting almost complete autonomy to the French African territories was approved by the National Assembly, it made no provision for the participation of the traditional chiefs in the projected governmental structure.[51] In fact, as preparations were being made to implement the new reforms, a number of politicians and educated Africans launched an attack on the chiefs which seems to have been a step toward edging them out of power altogether. The newspaper *Afrique Nouvelle*, published in Dakar but read by the educated elite throughout French West Africa, carried a series of articles that proclaimed: "The district chiefs should be given neither a position nor a salary!" "Let us democratize the chieftainship!" and "Let us decapitate the district!" (i.e., let us do away with the district chief). Over a photo showing the traditional chiefs, *Afrique Nouvelle* ran the caption, "Are they still chiefs of the territories?"[52]

The Mossi chiefs, who had retained more power and prestige than any other chiefs in French West Africa, bore the brunt of these attacks and rose to defend the rights of all the chiefs. Their most able spokesman was Bouda, a Councillor of the French Union and a district chief in his own right. He wrote in *Afrique Nouvelle*:

> The Mossi [socio-political] organization, by its simplicity and cohesiveness, aroused the admiration of France, which respected and retained it.
>
> The power of the Mossi chief may be great, but it is not used to oppose the progress which is being made. The Mossi chief is not as much of a conformist as people have a tendency to believe. The social and political revolution which, since 1946, has made Mossi country so different from what it was before the war, is effecting the transition from a society largely encompassed by Nabas possessing real authority, an authority sanctioned by custom, to a more progressive way of life whose essential characteristics are underlined by the growth of towns, the uprooting of a large part of the population, and the triumph of the desire to be on one's own. . . .

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When one asks the Mossi directly, "what is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capitals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Christians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional ancestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies except those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more persons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to be important when people are selling their own products. Most people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether these things are of African or European manufacture. This, incidentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about 10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought. When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts, a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces. Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering of meat: Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market. The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect taxes in their markets.

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taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished," the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and perhaps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people. The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabashfuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every-thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

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443 due to the bickering, quarreling and even fighting they have to
554 prevent by cooling the tempers of the market people—that they
776 become quite angry. When the spirits are not satisfied, they fail in
782 their tasks and real trouble breaks out in the market, disrupting the trading; and if they are not pacified they may even cause the death of the market officials.[12]

In the days before the market officials were banned, these sacrifices were performed regularly. At that time the Raga Naba simply asked the Kos Naba to seize the appropriate animal in the market to perform
[648] the rite. The problem today is that since the French have abolished the office of Raga Naba, and in some districts have prevented the chief from even naming one secretly, the markets in the latter local-
[208] ities are considered "dangerous markets." Once a market acquires such a reputation, people do not like to visit it because they fear that they would get into fights or quarrels. Not only this, but it is believed that if a market has been without a Raga Naba for a long time, the *tengkouga* there become so angry for being neglected that they kill
[123] the first chief appointed to it. This was the reality or belief behind a series of misadventures of which I was the victim.

123 I had spent an entire day in a market, and on returning home could
443 not find my pen. The next morning I sent an assistant to the chief
554 telling him about the loss and asking him to have an announcement
656 made in the market on the next market day that I would pay a handsome reward to whomever should find and deliver the pen. The chief sent back a reply saying that since there was no Raga Naba, he would have the Kos Naba acquaint the people with my loss. On the day of the market, I waited until midday, when most of the people had arrived, and then went to see whether the Kos Naba had any news of the pen. I checked with several of my friends to see whether they had heard about the pen and discovered, to my chagrin, that no an-
[564] nouncement had been made about it. I went and told the Kos Naba that the people were not hearing about the pen and suggested that one way to do so would be to have the Binderes (drummers and griots) circulate through the market announcing the loss. The Kos Naba refused to do this, and when I enlisted the aid of the chief's secretary, he, too, said that it could not be done because there was no Raga Naba. I had some notes on the institution of the Raga Naba, but as I did not know everything about it, I was, therefore, frankly puzzled

(12) Zahan (1954 : 371) states that "the place where all kinds of merchandise accumulate and where strangers come is a place charged with forces. In time, these forces build up to such a point within the precincts of the market that some purifications are necessary to liberate them. To omit making them would expose the participants to excitements leading to brawls and compromising the place of the transactions."

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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to explain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the crowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the passage of years, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga,* he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

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When a woman has a number of stillbirths or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage*,
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[575] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

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the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities.

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema,* and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law *(dakia)* of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening.

The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema,* led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia,* appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia,* carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages